

Tree TALK

Enhance timber and wildlife with ACF!



Consulting foresters help landowners make the right decisions for their properties.

If you own timberland and like to hunt, chances are you want to maximize your timber growth while enhancing wildlife habitat. Whether your goal is managing for timber sale income, hunting, underlying land value, recreational use, aesthetics, or all of the above, the best way to achieve success is to employ a qualified consulting forester.

What is a Consulting Forester?

Consulting foresters are educated, independent professionals who represent the best interests of their clients. They do not buy timber or have any other conflict of interest. The typical consulting practice offers comprehensive forest management services and charges a fee based on time and expenses for services rendered. A consulting forester is your “expert-for-hire” for forestry advice, just like your doctor provides you medical advice, your lawyer, legal advice and a CPA advises you on taxes.

Why Hire a Consulting Forester?

Because professional consulting foresters owe allegiance to their clients and not a timber buyer nor anyone else, they are able to assist landowners in achieving their objectives, especially when selling timber for a fair market price. This is particularly important because, according to Dr. Carlyle Franklin of the Association of Conservation Foresters (ACF), “more potential income to forest landowners is lost through poor marketing of stumpage than through fire, diseases, insects and storms combined.”

In addition to helping you get the best value for your timber, a consulting forester can help you plan for a sustainable timber harvest that will protect your family’s forest legacy. In fact, university research has shown that landowners using professional forestry advice receive on average 28 percent higher income from timber sales and, following a final harvest, have future timber stands that are 120 percent more productive!

Selecting a Consulting Forester

Working in the woods doesn't necessarily mean that someone is a forester. When hiring any consultant—forester, doctor, lawyer or CPA—the first two questions you need to ask them are “What’s your educational background?” and “How long have you been practicing?” Other important questions are “Do you have professional liability insurance?” and “Do you have a conflict of interest?”

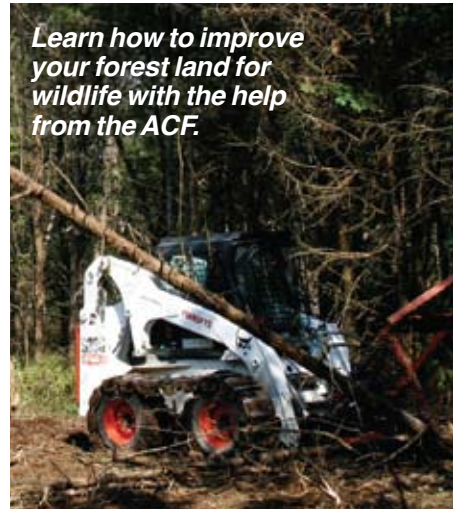
When you employ foresters with the initials ACF after their name, you know that you are hiring individuals who can give you satisfactory answers to your questions. Founded in 1948, the Association of Consulting Foresters was chartered by five individuals who believed that “it was in the public interest to establish minimum professional and ethical standards.” After more than 60 years, the rules formulated in 1948 have been strengthened but have remained essentially the same. In addition to a forestry degree from an approved university curriculum, members must have at least five

years practical forestry experience and no economic interest in a timber purchasing or procurement entity. All ACF members are professional foresters who are governed by a strict code of ethics and whose principal activity is providing consulting services to the general public on a fee or contract basis.

Now, back to managing forestland for wildlife. There are simple things that a consulting forester can recommend that will make a big difference. In fact, a well-managed forest is a virtual wildlife sanctuary.


Stephen Whitfield of the ACF recommends, “If wildlife is important to you, consider leaving a wider-than-required stream buffer when planning a harvest. Also, think about opening up the forest canopy along the edge of roads, called daylighting, to encourage growth of seeding grasses and legumes.”

In addition, your consulting forester can help you enhance habitat for wildlife with a forest management plan that includes practices like controlled



Learn how to improve your forest land for wildlife with the help from the ACF.

burning, appropriate thinning, brush control and protecting mast-producing trees like oaks and hickories. Since wildlife is sensitive to disturbance, your consultant can also see to it that management activities are properly and carefully executed. Moreover, when specialized wildlife habitat management advice is needed that is beyond your ACF consulting forester's expertise (from a wildlife biologist, for example), they are ethically obligated to, “engage, or advise their clients or employers to engage, other experts and specialists in forestry and related fields whenever the clients' or employers' interest would be best served.” These are just a few things your ACF consultant can do to help you enhance your turkey habitat. And remember, wildlife not only benefits from good forest management . . . landowners do too!

For more information on how the services of an ACF consulting forester can help enhance your total forest resource, call (888) 540-8733 or use the “Find an ACF Forester” feature at www.acf-foresters.org. 



Don't make a mistake that can cost you money and ruin habitat, consult with a certified forester.